



[Martin Luther King, 1929 – 1968](#)

Anti-Imperialism

Exactly how the anti-Imperialist struggle will resolve itself in South Africa, Southern Africa, and Africa in general, is something unpredictable at the tactical level. The question of the armed defence of revolutionary change cannot be ruled out, and we have examined this question.

This part of the present series, referenced to the “Beyond Vietnam” speech (attached, and linked below) of the late Rev Martin Luther King Junior, is designed to point to the subjective political factor in the anti-Imperialist struggle.

Nowadays it has become commonplace to refer to “international solidarity” as not only a specific, but more so a universal idea. But this concept that we have largely stripped of its particularity, generalising it as a formula, does actually have a tremendous history whose meaning is not fully conveyed by a stock phrase called “international solidarity”.

The anti-Imperialist struggle and the democratic struggle can and should be one. It is not a matter of charity of the rich to the poor. It is also not solely a matter of good-hearted and exceptional individuals. But there have indeed been such individuals – “MLK” was one of them – and there will be again.

What Martin Luther King describes, and justifies, is: *“why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church – the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate – leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.”*

In other words, MLK at the meeting of the “Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam”, in 1967, was preaching the intrinsic, organic unity of the struggle of the common people everywhere. It is not an artificial altruism, but it is a unity of purpose, in concerted action against the single enemy that manifests itself everywhere and oppresses us all: monopoly-capitalist Imperialism.

And further than his literal message, there is also the extraordinary power and style of MLK’s oration. We forget

this factor of art too easily. Lenin spoke of “insurrection as an art”. It is an art that goes beyond the military, and encompasses all of our activities. Therefore when reading such a piece as MLK’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech, one should regard it as a source of learning of the art of advocacy, which is part of the art of leadership, essential to the art of insurrection.

“Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God...” – Martin Luther King.

Picture: Rev. Martin Luther King, Junior, at the White House, Washington DC, USA

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Beyond Vietnam, Time to Break Silence, 1967, King.](#)
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